

The Source



News for Small, Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

Volume 11, Number 3

November 2006

Disparity Study

The City of Houston has contracted with Mason Tillman Associates, Ltd. to prepare a Disparity Study for the City. The Disparity Study will reassess the City's MWBE program goals. The study will include:

- a legal analysis,
- calculation of disparity ratios,
- review of the City's purchasing policies and procedures, and
- a private sector analysis of the City's prime contractors.



The study is scheduled for completion by December 31, 2006.

City has a Small Business Enterprise Certification Program for Construction Related Projects

The City of Houston has adopted a Small Business Enterprises classification for construction related projects. Under the classification, certified Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), will be able to pursue opportunities on City of Houston construction projects. The City's overall SBE construction goal is 15% Minority/Women Business Enterprise (MWBE), and 5% SBE. This goal will remain in place until the completion of a Disparity Study that will reassess the City's MWBE program goals. Completion of the study is slated for the end of the calendar year.

Small Business Enterprise (SBE) means a firm whose gross revenues or number of employees, averaged over the past three years, inclusive of any affiliates as defined by 13 CFR Section 121.103, does not exceed the size standards in Section 3 of the federal Small Business Act and applicable Small Business Administration regulations related to the size standards found in 13 CFR Part 121. More information can be found at <http://www.sba.gov/size/index/tableofsize.html> regarding "small business size standards..." The term shall also include City of Houston certified minority/women/disadvantaged businesses (M/W/DBEs).

The SBE certification classification, which is race and gender neutral, will be issued by the Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division (AACCD). AACCD will also provide outreach assistance to new and existing businesses to facilitate participation on City of Houston contracts in an effort to help stimulate overall economic development.

Interested business owners may attend the free M/W/DBE and SBE Precertification Workshop, held every Thursday at 2:00 p.m., 611 Walker, 7th floor to learn more about the program and the application process. The Small Business Enterprise application is also available online at <http://www.houstontx.gov/aacc/forms/application-sbe.pdf>.

For additional information, please contact the Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division at 713-837-9000.

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News Briefs



From the Director ~

Your input is important to us. The Mayor's Office of Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance is committed to providing quality certification, compliance, business development, and training programs to promote equal access, employment and economic opportunity at every level of City government; and to ensure compliance with local, state and federal mandates. The division is further committed to providing exceptional customer service that exceeds expectations. To do our job effectively, we need your input. In the near future, we will be sending out a business survey. If you receive one of these surveys, please fill it out and return it to us. The information will help us plan our future programs and will help us to provide you with better assistance.

The City's Municipal Channel is planning to regularly run our office's *Affirmative Access* television program on Wednesdays at 12:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. The program often highlights information that would be of interest to S/M/W/DBEs and PDBEs. Check your cable listings for the channel.

As the calendar year comes to an end, I want to wish each of you a happy and prosperous new year. Our office looks forward to serving you in 2007!

Director

Mark Your Calendar for GPC 2007



Government Procurement Connections (GPC) 2007, Houston's annual government contracting fair, will be held on March 26 and 27, 2007. GPC 2007 will provide networking forums, educational workshops and valuable contracting opportunities for business owners. Make sure to mark your calendar for this event. GPC's web site is located at www.houstongpc.com.

HMBC Receives National Honor

The Houston Minority Business Council (HMBC) was recently honored at the National Minority Supplier Development Council's (NMSDC's) Conference and Business Opportunity Fair in San Diego, California with NMSDC's "2006 Council of the Year" award. Over the last eight years, HMBC has received the award four times. There are thirty-nine regional councils located throughout the country that are eligible for this honor.



EEOC Web Site

Business owners wanting to learn more about equal employment opportunity laws and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) should visit the EEOC's web site at www.eeoc.gov. This web site provides information about discrimination based on areas such as age, race, national origin, religion, sex, and disability. Additionally, there is a "Small Business" category on the web site that answers some common questions.

EEOC

Check out www.business.gov

Small business owners should check out the U.S. government's web site at www.business.gov. This web site provides small business owners with a significant amount of valuable information on federal regulations.

Questions on the Reverse Auction Process Answered by the City of Houston's Strategic Purchasing Division

1. What is a reverse auction?

A reverse auction is just one of several procurement methods authorized by state law. Suppliers bid against each other by lowering the price. Reverse auction is a new technology utilized in the private sector since 1995. It has been a part of federal procurement for five years now and at the state level for three years. Pennsylvania was the first state to use reverse auctions. Texas authorized municipalities to use reverse auctions effective September 1, 2001.

2. How does it work?

At the scheduled time, pre-qualified bidders log into the e-procurement provider's website and begin their bidding. Buyers monitor the proceedings on their personal computers. Competing suppliers see the items up for auction and bid against each other. Bidders guarantee their bid by keying in a digital signature.

3. What kind of items or contracts are purchased or awarded this way?

Any commodity may be a candidate for a reverse auction type bid. This tool is intended to lower the price of products and services and to determine the "BEST VALUE" more easily and quickly. Of course the online bidding process is documented for protest and audit trail capacity.

4. How are suppliers made aware that a reverse auction is being used?

Potential suppliers are notified by the e-procurement provider by e-mail, fax, or phone. Suppliers who respond are given forms to complete to qualify for the auction. Suppliers, who accept the terms and conditions of the bid, including the e-procurement provider's fee, are given a password to participate in the reverse auction.

For more information about the City of Houston's Strategic Purchasing Division, visit their website at www.houstontx.gov/purchasing/index.html

Doing Business with the City of Houston's Building Services Department

The City of Houston Building Services Department invites all professional architectural firms, specifically small firms, wanting to do business with the City, to tell them about their firm. They want to know who you are and what you can do for the City.

The Building Services Department encourages all firms to become part of their database. If you have not had the opportunity to provide the Building Services Department with a statement of your qualifications before, or have not updated your information that is presently on file with them via a revised SF-254 or SF-330, and may not have given them a brochure of your firm, they ask that you do so now. It is time for you to update your data and submit it to the Building Services Department for inclusion in their database for future use. For SF-254 or SF-330 forms, please visit their website at www.houstontx.gov/buildingservices/design.html.

The Director of the Building Services Department, Issa Dadoush, P.E., encourages all firms that would like to do business with the City, to submit their information, in whatever form is convenient, to:

Wendy Teas Heger, AIA
Chief of Design and Construction Division
Building Services Department
900 Bagby, Second Floor
Houston, Texas 77002
Fax: 713.247.1219
BSDConsulting@cityofhouston.net

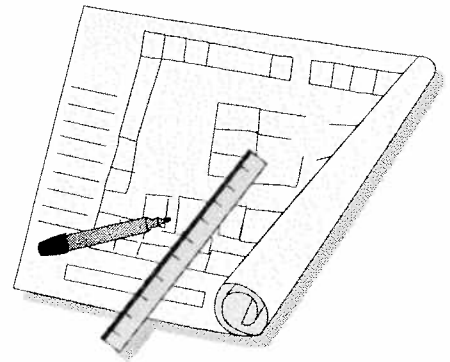
“How to Do Business with the City of Houston” Seminar



- Each quarter, the City of Houston offers the “How to Do Business with the City of Houston” Seminar for business owners wanting to learn the ins and outs of doing business with the City. The next seminar will be held on Tuesday, December 12, 2006 at City Hall from 10:30 a.m. until 12:00 noon. City Hall is located at 900 Bagby and the seminar will take place in the basement conference room #2. Ray DuRousseau, Deputy Assistant Director of the Finance and Administration Department’s Strategic Purchasing Division, will conduct the class.
- For more information, to register for the class, or if you are a person with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation, please call the Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division at 713.837.9043 (Relay Texas 1.800.735.2989 or 7.1.1) or fill out the registration form on the Upcoming Seminars page of this edition of The Source and fax it to the Affirmative Action Division at 713.837.9053. We cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodation without prior notification.

“How to Prepare a Successful Bid” Seminar

- The “How to Prepare a Successful Bid” seminar is conducted each quarter for business owners who would like to learn about the components of a bid package for the City, and want to discover how to successfully prepare a City bid. This quarter, the seminar will be held on Tuesday, January 23, 2007 at City Hall from 10:30 a.m. until 12:00 noon. City Hall is located at 900 Bagby and the seminar will take place in the basement conference room #1.
- Ray DuRousseau, Deputy Assistant Director of the Finance and Administration Department’s Strategic Purchasing Division, will conduct the class. DuRousseau will talk to the participants about how they can find out about bid opportunities and he will cover what they need to do to prepare a City bid.
- For more information, to register for the class, or if you are a person with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation, please call the Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division at 713.837.9043 (Relay Texas 1.800.735.2989 or 7.1.1) or fill out the registration form on the Upcoming Seminars page of this edition of The Source and fax it to the Affirmative Action Division at 713.837.9053. We cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodation without prior notification.



The Source for S/M/W/DBE news is published by the Mayor’s Office of Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance

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The City of Houston's Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division
and Houston Business Development, Inc. are sponsoring the

Understanding Financial Statements and Cash Flow Management Seminar

A representative of Houston Business Development, Inc. will conduct this
seminar for small business owners.

January 11, 2007
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Business and Technology Center (Palm Center)
5330 Griggs, Houston, TX 77021



For more information, to register for the class, or if you are a person with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation, please call the Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division at 713.837.9043 (Relay Texas 1.800.735.2989 or 7.1.1) or fill out the registration form on the Upcoming Seminars page of this edition of *The Source* and fax it to the Affirmative Action Division at 713.837.9053. We cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodation without prior notification.

The City of Houston's Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division,
the IRS, and Houston Business Development, Inc. are sponsoring the

Small Business Tax Seminar: Understanding "The Tax Gap" and Whether or Not You Are Paying the Right Amount of Taxes for Your Business



Learn why the IRS is focusing on "The Tax Gap" and why this concerns the
small business owner.

A representative from the IRS will conduct the presentation.

January 31, 2007
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Business and Technology Center (Palm Center)
5330 Griggs, Houston, TX 77021

For more information, to register for the class, or if you are a person with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation, please call the Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division at 713.837.9043 (Relay Texas 1.800.735.2989 or 7.1.1) or fill out the registration form on the Upcoming Seminars page of this edition of *The Source* and fax it to the Affirmative Action Division at 713.837.9053. We cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodation without prior notification.

There are still spaces available in the remaining classes of

The School of Construction Management

The School of Construction Management is an eight-part training series sponsored by The City of Houston's Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division, the Turner Construction Company, and Houston Business Development, Inc. The series began on October 24th, 2006. There is no charge for the training program.

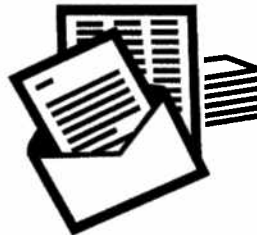
The program is designed to enhance the technical and managerial skills of small contractors and entrepreneurs in the construction industry. The remaining classes are noted below:

Dates:	Wednesday - November 29, 2006	Project Management
	Tuesday - December 05, 2006	Sales/Marketing
	Wednesday - December 06, 2006	Establishing and Managing Credit
	Tuesday - December 12, 2006	Networking/Graduation
Location:	Business and Technology Center (Palm Center) 5330 Griggs, Houston, Texas 77021	
Time:	5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	

For more information, to register for the classes, or if you are a person with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation, please call 713.837.9043 (Relay Texas 1.800.735.2989 or 7.1.1). We cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodation without prior notification. You may e-mail your registration by sending your name, company name, address, telephone number, and name of the training program to juan.padilla@cityofhouston.net.



Small Business Workshops Make Business Owners Aware of their Tax Responsibilities



The Internal Revenue Service and the Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce are sponsoring several tax workshops for small businesses over the next couple of months. The free seminars are designed to make business owners aware of their tax responsibilities. Registration is mandatory.

Date	Time	Location / Telephone Number
3 rd Tuesday of every month	12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce 2808 Wheeler Ave., Houston, TX 77004 713-522-9745
3 rd Thursday of every month	12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	SCORE 8701 S. Gessner, Suite 350, Houston, TX 77074 713-773-6566
Saturday, December 9, 2006	10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Katherine Tyra Library 16719 Clay Road, Houston, TX 77084 713-302-6249

Resource Agency Spotlight

Houston Business Development, Inc.

This article was provided by Houston Business Development, Inc.

Does your business need a loan to expand or to take your company to the next level but the banks say they can't help? Need information on how to get started but you don't know where to go? Maybe your answer is Houston Business Development, Inc. (HBD). For more than 19 years, the corporation has served as a catalyst in helping small, emerging businesses access hard to find capital for business expansion and growth.

Established by the City of Houston in 1986, HBD is a tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation engaged in stimulating economic growth throughout the City of Houston with a particular emphasis on low-moderate income neighborhoods. The corporation is governed by a 13-member board of directors comprised of business and community leaders and seeks to alleviate community deterioration and poverty through revitalizing neighborhoods and fostering employment opportunities for low-moderate income citizens.

Acting as a quasi public/private non-bank lending institution, HBD administers a HUD funded revolving loan fund enabling it to make small business loans with below market rates ranging from \$5,000 to \$250,000. Loans are often provided in tandem with commercial banks and are intended to provide "gap" financing for projects that conventional lenders may consider marginal or borderline. Loans can be used for real estate acquisition, purchase of equipment, inventory working capital or any legitimate business financing need. Loans can also be made directly without bank participation up to \$50,000.

To further enhance services to small businesses, HBD recently introduced a new micro-enterprise loan program, "Fast Track", which is designed to help small micro-businesses that operate in low-income neighborhoods. "Fast Track" loans can range from \$5,000 up to \$25,000 and have minimal upfront application requirements. Applicants are not required to provide a business plan, tax returns, or business financial statements and the loan can be funded within 72 hours of the date of application. With monthly payments as low as \$84 the program has proven to be a viable tool for small businesses.

Businesses can also take advantage of the corporation's Business Technology Center (BTC), a 160,000 sq. ft., mixed-use, business complex, that provides a variety of support services for emerging businesses. HBD regularly offers a series of small business workshops and seminars covering a variety of business related topics. Counselors from HBD, the Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE), and Urban Business Initiatives (UBI) are on hand daily to provide free, one-on-one counseling and business planning assistance. For those looking to move from their home based office, affordable office suites are available ranging from 100 square feet to 1,000 square feet. Tenants and visitors to the center are provided access to an array of support services including conference rooms, meeting rooms, administrative support services, postal box rental, notary services, a business resource library, and a computer lab just to name a few. The BTC houses over 45 businesses and is also home to several workforce development, educational and public service providers.

Together, the combined services of HBD provide an invaluable resource for Houston's small business community and the residents of the city. For additional information, please contact HBD at 713.845.2400 or visit the HBD web site at www.HBDINC.org.



5330 Griggs Road, Houston, Texas 77021
Phone: 713.845.2400 | Fax: 713.645.2830
Email: info@hsbdc.org



City of Houston

611 Walker, 7th floor, Houston, Texas 77002 713.837.9000
Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division
Velma Laws, Director

Upcoming Seminars

School of Construction Management
(8-part training series that began on
October 24th.)

November 29, December 5, 6, and 12, 2006
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Business and Technology Center
(Palm Center)
5330 Griggs
Houston, TX 77021

This training series is designed to enhance the technical and managerial skills of small contractors and entrepreneurs in the construction industry. Topics to be discussed include: project management, sales/marketing, and establishing and managing credit. (8-part series began on October 24, 2006. Space is still available in the remaining classes.)

How to Do Business with the City

December 12, 2006
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
City Hall
900 Bagby, Basement, Conf. Room #2
Houston, TX 77002

Learn the ins and outs of doing business with the City of Houston including information on bids & proposals for purchasing, professional, construction, and engineering services.

Understanding Financial Statements
and Cash Flow Management

January 11, 2007
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Business and Technology Center
(Palm Center)
5330 Griggs
Houston, TX 77021

A representative of Houston Business Development, Inc. discusses understanding financial statements and cash flow management for small businesses.

How to Package a Successful Bid

January 23, 2007
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
City Hall
900 Bagby, Basement, Conf. Room #1
Houston, TX 77002

Explore the components of a bid package for the City of Houston and discover how to successfully prepare your City bid.

Small Business Tax Seminar:
Understanding "The Tax Gap" and
Whether or Not You Are Paying the
Right Amount of Taxes for Your
Business

January 31, 2007
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Business and Technology Center
(Palm Center)
5330 Griggs
Houston, TX 77021

A representative from the IRS will conduct this class. Learn why the IRS is focusing on "The Tax Gap" and why this concerns the small business owner.

FAX this response form to 713.837.9053 or e-mail the information to juan.padilla@cityofhouston.net to reserve your seat today!

Yes, I will attend the following events:

☐ School of Construction Management

Name

☐ How to Do Business with the City of Houston

Company

☐ Understanding Financial Stmtns. and Cash Flow Mgmt.

Address

☐ How to Package a Successful Bid

City/State/Zip

☐ Small Business Tax Seminar

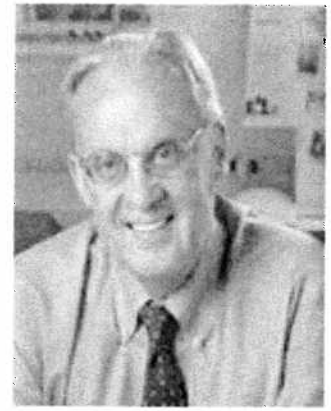
Phone

E-mail Address

Call 713.837.9043 (Relay Texas 1.800.735.2989 or 7.1.1) for more information or if you are a person with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation. We cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodation without prior notification.



**Mayor Pro Tem
Michael Berry
and
Councilman
Peter Brown**



will host a

Small Business Contracting Forum on January 18, 2007

Article by Aleks Mraovic (Edited version)

The Small Business Contracting Forum, sponsored by Mayor Pro Tem Michael Berry and Councilman Peter Brown, will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2007, at the METRO Administration Building, 1900 Main (5:00-7:30 p.m.). By sponsoring the Small Business Contracting Forum, they are hoping to provide an informative environment that will introduce the many contracting opportunities that are available for small, minority, women and disadvantaged businesses in dealing with the City of Houston, the Port of Houston Authority and with the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

The City's Minority/Women Business Enterprise Program was first created in 1984. It represented the first program in the State of Texas that set specifics for including minorities and women in City funded contracting, and now includes a certification component for small construction firms. The Port of Houston administers a small business program, while METRO operates a small/disadvantaged business enterprise program.

These programs provide an interactive business climate where resource agencies, financial institutions, and businesses work together to provide equal access to contracting opportunities for minority, women, disadvantaged and small business enterprises, as well as for business enterprises involving persons with disabilities.

During the event on January 18th, there will be informative presentations from several experts, including, Port Commissioner Janiece Longoria; President of ESPA Corp, Karun Sreerama; Access Data Supply President Renee Logans; and other prime contractors who are doing business with these entities.

Small businesses are encouraged to take advantage of this event to get information about potential contracting opportunities with the City, the Port of Houston Authority, and the Metropolitan Transit Authority. **If you have any questions, need additional information or to RSVP (by January 16th) for this Small Business Contracting Forum, please call Carl Davis with Mayor Pro Tem Michael Berry's Office at 713-247-2006.**

Representatives from the City of Houston, the Port of Houston Authority, METRO, and the Houston Minority Business Council will attend the forum.